Custom Tabulations Without Statistical Software – from June 2014 CSDC Network News

You can perform custom tabulations of Census data without the use of statistical software such as SPSS or SAS? The Census Bureau's DataFerrett system and the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Online Data Analysis System (SDA) from the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota are a couple of online applications that provide the ability to produce cross-tabulations. For this issue's *Tips and Tricks*, we will look at the IPUMS SDA and its capability to compute new data variables based on one or more existing numeric variables.

IPUMS SDA's feature for creating new variables enables you to adjust dollar values, such as income, for inflation and compare the amounts across years. For example, you might be interested in comparing total personal income (INCTOT) between 1999 and 2009 using data from the decennial censuses. You can write an expression such as the one below to create a new variable that multiplies the 2009 dollars by an adjustment factor that would deflate the dollars to the amount they would have represented in 1999. For your convenience, IPUMS has created a variable called CPI99 that provides the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) multiplier (available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics) to convert dollar figures to constant 1999 dollars.

    IF (INCTOT ne 9999999)
        NewVariable = INCTOT * CPI99

    Note: A value of 9999999 in INCTOT represents N/A. The IF statement ensures that non-applicable incomes are not multiplied by the adjustment factor.

You can also adjust the 1999 dollars to 2009 dollars. IPUMS have provided a chart containing the adjustment factors to convert constant 1999 dollars to dollars for another base year. More information on creating variables is available at the IPUMS SDA's Online Help for Creating New Variables: https://sda.usa.ipums.org/helpfiles/helpnewv.htm#Cexpr. Note that access to this webpage requires user registration.

CPS Weights – from June 2014 CSDC Network News

Usual weekly hours worked and earnings questions in the Current Population Survey (CPS) are asked of households only in their 4th and 8th interview? Households are interviewed each month for 4 months, dropped out of the survey sample for the next 8 months, then interviewed again for 4 more months. **Since households are not asked about their weekly earnings and their usual weekly hours worked in every interview, a different weight (A-ERNLWT) is used for these data variables in the CPS to inflate the sample to correspond to the full population.** If you use the final person weight or March Supplement person weight for usual hours worked/earnings variables, you will not get representative figures.